

Michigan Young Adult Commission Proposal

HB 5202



What is being proposed?

The initiative that we are proposing is the creation of a commission by the Michigan legislature that would represent Michigan's youth and young adults between the ages of 16-28.

What is the purpose of the commission?

The purpose and mission of the Young Adult Commission is more than a simple answer. The commission would serve the vital purpose of being a representative body of Michigan's older youth and newly minted young adults to the governor and the legislature. The young adult council would be a body of individuals, from the demographic appointed, to advocate for issues that are important to the younger generation. In addition, this group will serve as the go-to body when the governor and the legislature want to get input from this generation of Michiganders.

Why does Michigan need a young adult commission?

Currently, we are seeing a trend that projects fewer young people, especially those who are college educated, will remain long-term residents of the State of Michigan. Michigan's continued economic recovery and vitality is tied to how competitive the State is in retention and attraction of this essential demographic. This commission will help to harvest the talent of Michigan's youth and young adults by making them an important part of the policymaking process for decisions that will affect them for decades to come. The council will also empower and recognize the talents of our younger population.

Comparable commissions

The Hispanic and Latino Commission: Represent the Hispanic and Latino community.

The Michigan Women's Commission: Meant to represent the interest of women in Michigan.

The Asian and Pacific American Affairs Commission: Represents the interests of the Asian community of Michigan.

The Arab and Chaldean American Affairs Commission: Represent the interest of the Arab and Chaldean American community in Michigan.

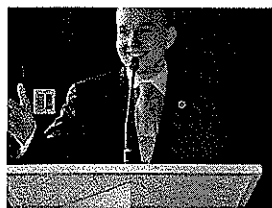
Why creating a Michigan Young Adult Commission is a good idea?

The Michigan Young Adult Commission will give a voice to a demographic that is largely disconnected from what is going on in state government. It will be an effective way to recognize the talents and innovative ideas the youth can bring to leading Michigan into a brighter and more vibrant future. The commission will give legislators a specific group of individuals who will help to provide the pulse of the youth in Michigan. It will signal that in Michigan, you do not have to wait until you are older to get involved; it will say that Michigan values its youth and in turn that will make Michigan a more competitive state in the future.

Soviak: Give the future of Michigan a voice

– Michael Soviak is the President of Michigan's Future United, advocating on behalf of young Michiganders and working on legislation to reverse Michigan's brain drain.

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(Photo: submitted photo)

Michigan – the home of immense forests, great lakes, the motor city, the arsenal of democracy and almost ten million Michiganders – has seen its fair share of ups and downs. Michigan put the world on wheels and saved the world from oppression with its factories that produced the allies weapons in World War II.

Michigan has seen growth in the economy and severe retractions that left many Michiganders struggling. The lost decade left many Michiganders wondering was Michigan's heyday over. Yet like so many times in our history we overcame one of the most turbulent times in recent memory and have returned Michigan to a solid footing.

Since 2011 Michigan has seen the unemployment rate fall to that of the national average. The auto industry is roaring back with the vengeance of an 8-cylinder engine straight off the assembly lines on Jefferson Ave. Detroit, Michigan's most populous city is experiencing a revival that if sustained bodes well for all of Michigan.

Despite all of these achievements and indicators that Michigan is back and better than ever, there lingers a problem that if not dealt with could hold Michigan back in the future.

Michigan's recovery and future is at risk if we as a state cannot get better at retaining the young residents that achieve at least a bachelors degree. Michigan for over a decade has faced a problem coined the "brain drain". The brain drain is when the state has a negative net migration out of the state of residents 22-34 that have at least a bachelors degree. Simply put Michigan is losing more college educated young residents than is coming into the state.

The brain drain has persisted despite the economic growth that has been occurring in Michigan for the past five years. There are multiple negative side effects that stem from the brain drain.

The first and most obvious effect is the negative effect on the economy of Michigan. Having a highly educated workforce not only creates jobs for those with college degrees but also for those without degrees.

Second, Michigan spends millions of dollars to educate a resident from grade school on up. Thus every time we lose a resident we have educated from a young age, we lose that investment.

The affect on Michigan families is an overlooked negative symptom that comes from the brain drain. Many Michigan families have had to deal with a son or a daughter leaving the state. The brain drain has led to splintered families all across Michigan.

What Michigan must do is get serious about retaining our youth if we are serious about making Michigan a prosperous state in the future. The first step is getting the youth involved in the decisions that are made in Lansing. That is exactly what House Bill 5202 will do.

Michigan House Bill 5202 would create a nine member Michigan Youth Advisory Council. The members would be from the ages of 16-28 and would be appointed by the Governor and Legislative leaders. The council will work with the Legislature and the Governor to craft policies that will make Michigan more competitive at retaining its educated youth.

The council will take the very important role of listening and bringing the voice of the youth to the leaders of Michigan in Lansing. On every issue that faces the state the council will be the voice of the youth on that issue. The council will also work to ensure that the youth are on the minds of the legislature throughout the year.

The council will give young Michiganders an opportunity to take a vested interest in the future of their state. By giving the youth a place to voice their opinions and have a say in the path of Michigan, it will signal that Michigan is serious about retaining our educated youth.

This brain drain is one of the most serious issues facing our state and if we fail to take action immediately we are jeopardizing the future of Michigan. If we do not reverse the brain drain Michigan is at risk for losing the next Henry Ford, Gerald Ford or Dan Gilbert. Therefore the Legislature must pass and Governor Snyder sign House Bill 5202 to take the first steps to reverse the brain drain.

– Michael Soviak is the President of Michigan's Future United, advocating on behalf of young Michiganders and working on legislation to reverse

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